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Public Libraries and Literary Culture in Ancient Rome. By Clarence Eugene Boyd. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press (1915). Pp. 77. \$1.00.

Professor Boyd discusses the literary, inscriptional, and monumental data concerning public libraries at Rome in the first four centuries of the Empire, with special reference to the first one hundred and fifty years of that period. He considers the libraries from six points of view: their history, their equipment, their contents, their management, their object, and their cultural significance. The discussion is in what may be called 'thesis' form and gives an orderly presentation of the subject.

Of the twenty-eight public libraries which flourished in Rome in the fourth century of the Empire, only nine can be identified in name, and but seven in location. The nine are<sup>1</sup> (1) Bibliotheca in Atrio Libertatis; (2) B. Templi Apollinis; (3) B. Porticus Octaviae; (4) B. Templi Augusti; (5) B. Domus Tiberianae; (6) B. in Templo Pacis; (7) B. in Foro Traiani; (8) B. in Capitolio; (9) B. in Templo Aesculapii.

In the matter of library organization the Romans were naturally influenced by the systems of Assyria, Alexandria, and Pergamum; but they also in certain ways made advances on these systems. Study of the evidence concerning Roman libraries, and comparison with the libraries of Nineveh, Alexandria<sup>1</sup>, and Pergamum, indicate that the Romans observed the following usages:

a) The library was regularly placed in proximity to a temple or palace, a patron god or deified hero being consequently associated with it. b) In the group of structures an eastern location was preferable for the library. c) The interior of the library was adorned in an artistic manner. d) Systematic methods were employed in the management of the library.

Interior ornamentation and systematic arrangement are two phases which show Roman advance over the Eastern prototypes.

As regards the contents of the libraries, while it is not clear to what extent specialization entered into the formation of these collections, it is reasonable to suppose that certain subjects or certain kinds of books were better represented in one library than in another. Thus, we note that the Library in Trajan's Forum was especially rich in books of reference. Taken together, the libraries offered the public a wide range of works for reading and study. There were books in Latin and books in Greek, books ancient and books modern, books poetic and books prosaic, literary books and scientific books. Law, history, biography, oratory, private documents (including historical data and imperial correspondence), public documents (including edicts, decrees, public acts, treaties, state records, etc.) were among the subjects represented. We should have been glad to know, if Professor Boyd

could have told us, how the public appreciated the facilities offered to it. By whom were the libraries used and to what extent were they used?

Professor Boyd notes that information about the duties of various library officials and the details of library organization is gleaned from inscriptions, while facts, few in number, concerning the personality of certain librarians are derived from literary notices. Anything further that we may say about the personnel of library administration is chiefly matter of inference. *Procurator*, a *bibliotheca*, *vilicus* a *bibliotheca*, *librarius*, *librarius a manu* are some of the terms discussed in this section; Asinius Pollio, Pompeius Macer, C. Iulius Hyginus, and Gaius Melissus are among the personalities of whom mention is made. "All data that survive warrant the conclusion that intellectuality, literary training, and professional efficiency were characteristics demanded of the several grades of administrators and attachés in the public libraries", is the sufficiently conservative inference drawn as to the personnel of the library staff.

The reasons for maintaining public libraries in ancient Rome were, according to Professor Boyd, three: the preservation of books and records, the instruction of the public (by reading in the library, reference and research, and withdrawal of books), and cultural influences (as indicated by the location of the libraries, their adornment, and their use as centers for social, literary, and political gatherings).

Under the heading Literary Culture of the Early Empire brief mention is made of such cultural influences as schools, bookshops, public baths, and literary circles.

Professor Boyd concludes that the value of public libraries in the life of Rome has been greatly underestimated. In summing up, he says:

... they were a powerful reflector of Rome's literary ideals; they assisted very appreciably in furthering the literary interests of the Empire; they were directly serviceable in furnishing material for both cultural improvement and research.

The book is provided with a Bibliography and an Index.

CAMBRIDGE, MASS.

J. W. H. WALDEN.

### IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

The Eleventh Annual Meeting of The Classical Association of the Atlantic States and the Tenth Annual Meeting of The Classical Association of Pittsburgh and Vicinity will be held together, at the University of Pittsburgh, on Friday and Saturday, April 27-28 next.

Details of the programme of this meeting are rapidly taking shape.

The Classical Association of the Atlantic States has never met further west than Philadelphia. Here is an opportunity for the members to show their interest in the Association, and at the same time to visit an interesting city.

CHARLES KNAPP, *Secretary*.

<sup>1</sup>Why, by the way, is the erection of the library in the Serapeum assigned to a time after the destruction of the big library?